

Summer 2022

Downtown 78621



ELGIN • TEXAS

A local magazine. It's all about Elgin.



WESTERN DAYS: A TRADITION THAT WE CHOOSE



Parade Collage created by Erin Ramirez-Tatro for her Girl Scout Gold Award. On display at the Fleming Center.

"I always enjoyed taking my kids and my grandkids to the street dance. They would run around with their friends while I got to hang out with mine."
-Fletcher Ramirez



"What I look forward to at Western Days is the Friday Night Dance. Everyone comes out and you run into people you haven't seen in a while. Brian always runs into old classmates. There is a lot of catching up and old stories shared. I love the people watching."
-Jamie Lundgren

"Growing up in Elgin, Western Days was always an exciting time. The whole week was filled with fun events and getting your yard mowed and decorated for the parade on Saturday morning. If I wasn't marching in the band or riding on a float, you would find me at my grandparents house in the front yard. In later years we would be in mine and Ronnie's front yard on Main Street watching the parade with grandparents, parents, children and friends. The parade has always brought all generations together to watch and be part of this wonderful celebration. Everyone is in a festive mood with lot's of laughter big smiles and visiting with family and friends."
-Rhonda Lundgren-Moore

"Western Days for me was always friends and family. Making memories with my kids and now their kids while watching the parade or running through the park. It was and still is the highlight of our Western Days."
-Liston Crim

Life is so interesting. How it comes full circle. This is my first year to take on Western Days as the lead planner. My dream coming true. A tradition that I genuinely love. I got into my position at the Chamber and was excited to bring back my favorite events from when I was growing up. I quickly learned how many obstacles there can be. I found out that the chamber is now responsible for the entire event, when it used to be taken on by many entities. I somehow never knew that this one event is the main source of income for us to run as a chamber. Which means, while we love to put on a festival that will hopefully be enjoyed by all, we also need to be mindful of the cost. (How did I not ever know this??)

We will be shaking things up a bit this year. Trying out some new and keeping a balance of the past. It is always a bit nerve-wracking to introduce change. It is natural to want to stick to comfort. Not everything has seemed to work itself out, and I have been nervous about what the reaction will be to some of our long-time residents. Then I found myself in a conversation with my grandpa.

On Easter Sunday, was his 89th birthday. We sat around and listened to stories of when he grew up. We talked about his favorite memories, and then we shared some of ours. I told him how I always loved that he took us to the street dance every year. My grandpa took us to the carnival and to the parade, every single year. He took us down to the park and gave us money to run around and enjoy. I realized that my favorite tradition of Western Days was not any activity that once was held. It was the memories of being with my grandpa. It was the memories of hanging out with my classmates. It was the people that made Western Days so special to me. It was a community tradition, and we get to choose to keep that tradition.

I hope that you and your family join us this year. Come out to the first ever fashion show and family portraits on Thursday night. Join us for a tennis court dance on Friday night. Plan your whole day with us Saturday, starting with the parade. Come back for your family tradition or start a new one with us. It's a great time to celebrate 150 years of Elgin, TX. It's the perfect time to choose your tradition.

Veronica Seever,
Community Engagement &
Special Events Coordinator



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THURSDAY

Family & Fashion Night

CARNIVAL: 6-10 PM

No festival is complete without a carnival. Rides will open at 6 PM with family night and continue through Saturday. Located at the end of Main & 95 in Memorial Park.

DJ FERNANDO CARLOS: 6:30 PM-10 PM

Dropping all the beats, DJ Fernando Carlos will kick off Western Days at the pavilion starting at 6:30 PM. He will help emcee the fashion show and bring the music back when we are all fashioned out.

PHOTO BLOCKS BY JENNIFER RUDOLPH: 6:30 PM- 8:30 PM

Come out and grab a fabulous black and white photo block by one of our favorite photographers. Jennifer Rudolph will snap the fun photos and mail them straight to you.

RAILROAD RUNWAY FASHION SHOW: 8-9:30 PM

Join us down at the pavilion for Elgin's first ever fashion show! We will be highlighting local boutiques and salons to showcase their favorite styles. There will be four age groups from our community represented on the runway, and you will decide who the top models are. This is a new event, and we can't wait to share it with you all.

Don't forget to bring your phone for our selfie station provided by La La Balloonza. Let the kids dress up for a picture in our fashion trunk. Grab something to eat by one of our local vendors. Join us for this first-time event in beautiful Elgin, TX.



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FRIDAY

Golf Tournament & Tennis Court Dance

WESTERN DAY'S GOLF TOURNAMENT: 9 AM SHOTGUN

Our Western Day's Golf Tournament has been a huge success. Grab a team of four and take on the beautiful course at Shadow Glen. Awards will follow immediately for the winning teams, longest drive and closest to the hole. A light breakfast will be provided by D2 Sports Bar & Grill and lunch by Southside Market. Teams of four are \$500, and sponsorships are available.

TENNIS COURT DANCE: 7 PM- 11 PM

It's back y'all. Well, at least for this year. We wanted a throwback with Elgin's Sesquicentennial year (we're 150 years old y'all) and what better way than the tennis court dance. Last Note Productions will get the music started at 7 PM, and the show will start at 8 PM. Get your boots ready for some dancing, as we will be featuring rising country music artist Braxton Keith. There will be a \$5 charge to get into the tennis court for dancing, but as always it is free to hang out in the park and listen. Grab your friends, your classmates, or your family and let's kick it old school style.

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SATURDAY

Grand Parade & Festival in the Park

GRAND PARADE: 10 AM

This year's parade is going to be a blast. With a theme of choosing your favorite decade, we are sure to see some creative floats. The parade starts at 11th street and proceeds on Main Street through downtown. Western Days is home of one of the largest parades in Central Texas.

ART, CRAFTS & FOOD BOOTHS:

Join us down in Memorial Park immediately following the Grand Parade. Enjoy 100 vendors featuring their art, passions and favorite products. The food court area will offer delicious festival food favorites including funnel cakes, kettle corn, turkey legs and more.

VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT:

This popular event is always a crowd favorite. The first eight teams to sign up and pay their entry fee will be eligible to compete for the championship title.

HORSESHOE/WASHER TOURNAMENT:

These are one of the longest running events at our festival. There is a \$25 entry fee and winners will receive cash and prizes. Sign up is on the day of the event. Limited spots available, so be sure to get there early.

CHAMBER CORNHOLE CHALLENGE:

We are spicing things up with this new challenge. As a fundraising event for the Elgin Chamber of Commerce, this challenge is geared towards organizations. (Although individual teams can challenge others as well) How it works: \$100 to challenge a team and \$100 to accept the challenge. It is a four-person team, best of three games, and winners get bragging rights and a t-shirt y'all.

MUSIC IN THE PARK:

You can't have a festival, without music to enjoy. With a variety of genres and five different bands, the music will kick off at 11:30 AM and continue until the festival has come to a close. Be sure and check out the line-up on page 5.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:

Grab your kids' swimsuit and get ready for some water fun! This year we will be hosting a Tsunami Inflatable Water Park that is sure to be a favorite. Featuring water slides in various sizes and the always fun dunk tank. This is the perfect way to keep the kids cool and entertained for hours. Don't worry, there will be plenty to do for those kids that can't get in the water. Bracelets will be sold for \$15 for 4 hours of entertainment.



Sponsoring Organizations

City of Elgin,
Elgin Main Street Board
Elgin Chamber of Commerce
Elgin Economic Development Corporation

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FRIDAY NIGHT *Tennis Court Dance*



There will be a \$5 charge to get into the tennis court for dancing. It's free to hang out in the park.

Braxton Keith is from Midland, Texas.

In kindergarten he started by playing the piano and learning music theory. Since then he hasn't been able to put an instrument down. His heroes consist of country & western legends such as Marty Robbins, Merle Haggard, Brooks and Dunn, Hank Williams, Bob Wills, George Strait to name a few.

These artists and their songs influenced him to learn the guitar, and to try and leave his mark on country music. He loves to entertain people. He's been on the road the past 2 years opening shows for Triston Marez, Jon Wolfe, Randall King & Jake Worthington.

He is signed to Nashville's Torrez Music Group.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Behind every great event, is a group of volunteers making it happen. We are in need of volunteers for each event (day) and are looking to our community. Sign up for a three-hour shift and help us make this a success. To get involved email veronicaseever@elgintxchamber.com and let us know which event you would like and times you are available. Seriously, can we already say thank you!

SPONSORSHIP:

Western Days is only possible due to the incredible support and love we get from our sponsors. We have an opportunity for every budget, from \$100-\$2,000. We are currently in the most need for hole and award sponsors at our Golf Tournament. Check out our website at www.elgintxchamber.com to pledge your support.

CLASS REUNIONS:

Western Days is known as the homecoming of our Elgin Alumni. Don't forget to put in your free application to be a part of our Grand Parade. This year's theme is "Pick Your Favorite Decade," because we are 150 years old y'all. Be sure to join us in the park throughout the events. It's a great year to have a great year! Grab your entry form on our website at www.elgintxchamber.com or come by the chamber and see us in person.



SATURDAY *Band Line Up*



THE THOMAS FAMILY 11:30 - 12:15



SHOP DAWGZ 12:45 - 1:30



CHUBBY KNUCKLE CHOIR 2:00 - 2:45



LOS AVENTUREROS 3:15 - 4:00



JUSTIN HARGROVE 4:30 - 5:30

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You are cordially invited to join **Elgin's Founders' Day** festivities on **Saturday, August 20th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Booker T. Washington Elementary School**. The event will kick off with a formal program beginning at 10 a.m. in the Gymnasium. The program will recognize Elgin's founders aged 90+, honor our Hogeye roots, pay homage to our railroad and agricultural ties, and recognize the role that Booker T. Washington played in our past all while looking forward to and celebrating a much brighter future. Attendees can also record oral histories and learn about our cultural heritage.

Immediately following the program, enjoy a variety of musical performances, sit down and relax with your community, and help us **celebrate 150 years of history at our old fashioned style birthday party celebration from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.** A variety of indoor and outdoor activities, children's birthday party favorites such as balloon animals and face painting, interactive local history games, festival fare and ice cold treats, and of course a birthday cake worthy of turning 150! Don't miss this historic, once in a lifetime event.

Visit us online to learn more and get involved with #etx150!



Why are we celebrating Elgin's birthday on Saturday August 20? Because we were founded on August 18, 1872 and Saturdays make for perfect birthday celebrations! Named on August 18, 1872, for Robert Morris Elgin, the railroad's land commissioner, following the practice of naming new railroad towns after officers of the company. The original plat placed the train depot in the center of a one-square-mile area.

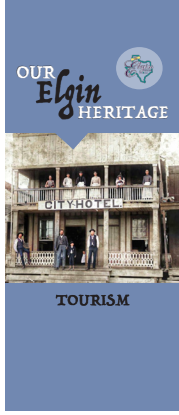
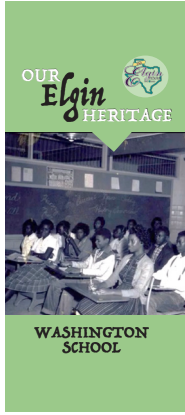
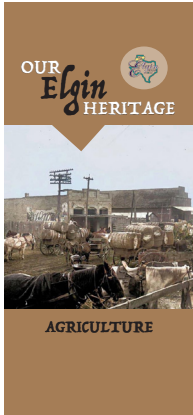
ELGIN FOUNDER'S DAY HISTORY

The City of Elgin owes its existence to a major flood of the Colorado River in 1869. Originally, the railroad was to have run from McDade 10 miles (16m) east of Elgin, southwest to the Colorado River at a point somewhere between Bastrop and Webberville, then to Austin following the river.

In 1871, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad (succeeded by the Southern Pacific Transportation Company) built through the area and established a flag stop called Glasscock named for George W. Glasscock, a local resident and Republic of Texas soldier who lived in the area in the 1830s. Glasscock was renamed on August 18, 1872, for Robert Morris Elgin, the railroad's land commissioner, following the practice of naming new railroad towns after officers of the company. Elgin was established. The original plat placed the train depot in the center of a one-square-mile area.

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150 YEARS OF ELGIN HISTORY ON DISPLAY

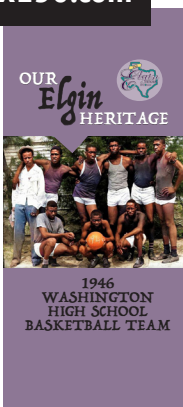
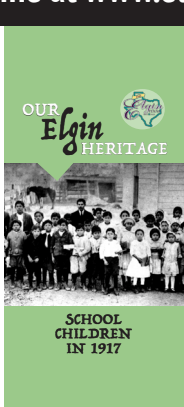
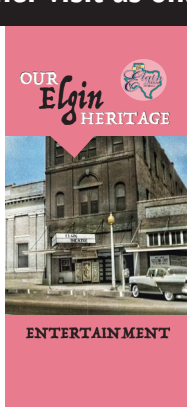
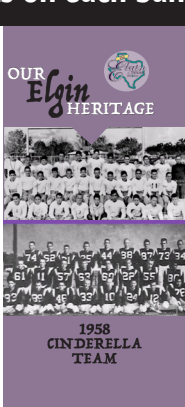
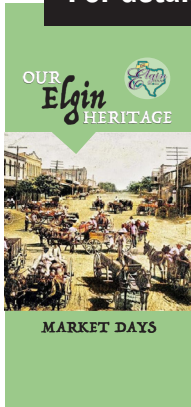
The Elgin Sesquicentennial committee is proud to put **150 years of Elgin history on display** in the recently unveiled light pole banner project. The commemorative series of pictorial history banners can be seen on **Lee Dildy Boulevard** and in the **historic downtown** area beginning this week.

The banners share snippets of the community's iconic past, such as the railroad. The banners also share history that requires harder conversations such as the segregation of our community and our schools from 1872 through the late 1960's. The images selected for the banners are historic **photos courtesy of Elgin Historical Association and the Depot**

Museum, as well as some imagery artistically modified by local artist Collin Sheehan. The banners were designed by local graphic designer, Sonia Browder and produced by Sign and Banner in Bastrop, Texas. The banner project was funded by the Sesquicentennial Committee and installed by the City of Elgin Public Works Department.

The **pictorial history** contains a total of thirteen different images spanning **historical and cultural references** since the City's founding in 1872. The banners are tied to specific cultural aspects and local heritage and include images of the Railroad. #ETX150

For details on each banner visit us online at www.etcx150.com



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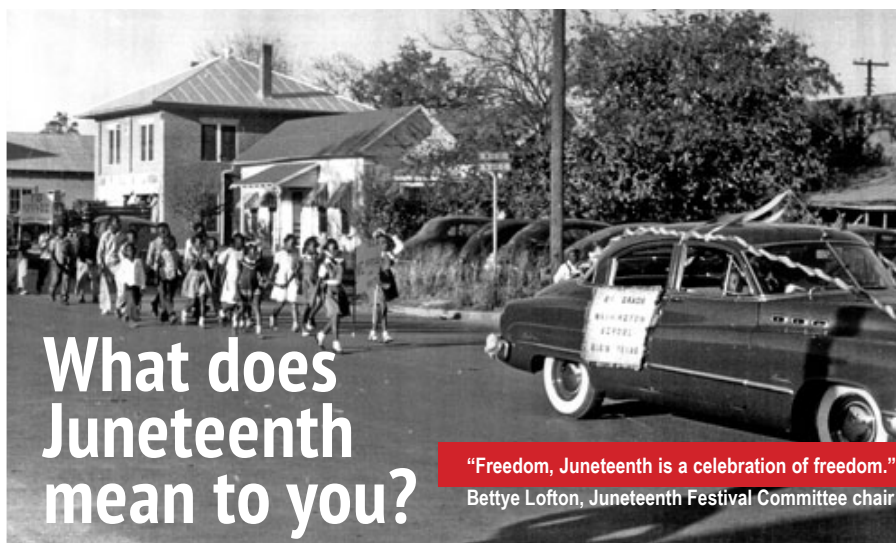


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What does Juneteenth mean to you?

"Freedom, Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom."
Bettye Lofton, Juneteenth Festival Committee chair



June•teenth

A holiday celebrated on 19 June to commemorate the emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. The holiday was first celebrated in Texas, where on that date in 1865, in the aftermath of the Civil War, slaves were declared free under the terms of the 1862 Emancipation Proclamation.

"A special day of recognition and acknowledgement of the freeing of enslaved people. Freedom for all remembering our past and moving with hope and thanksgiving."

Marilyn Jones, Ph D



"As a kid growing up in Huntsville, Texas, my relatives would always drive up from Houston and we would celebrate Juneteenth with food, fellowship and friends."

Bishop Mayer, Jr.

"First, a time to Thank God and come together as family and community to celebrate and reflect on our history of Juneteenth and also to teach our young people about the history. This is something we should reflect and educate on every day and not just once a year."

Elsie Williams, Juneteenth Festival Committee



"Juneteenth is a time of celebrating our past freedom from slavery. We have come a long way. We have much more work to do.

Back in my younger years, I remember us having barbecues with watermelon and Big Red soda with all of our family and friends. Sometimes we had family reunions during this time.

Juneteenth is really a time of celebration and happiness. We are pushing ahead. We are grateful for everyone who supports us in any way."

Mary A. Penson

"Means June 19, 1865 when Gordon Grange arrived in Galveston, Texas and announced that all slaves were free. It took almost 2.5 years for the proclamation to reach several southern states. Even though the Civil War was being fought southern slaves were not informed they were free because they were considered property and crops had to be planted & harvested.

A MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY

Tea cakes are most associated with the enslaved people of the South who baked them for slaveholders- and for their own families. When many of them left the South after the Civil War, they took their recipes with them. Tea cakes have been baked and talked about in African American kitchens for generations.

The tea cake is an integral part of African American food culture. Made from cupboard ingredients-lard, butter, sugar, molasses, and flour, the tea cake likely represents the efforts of enslaved Africans to reproduce the fluffy confections they were asked to create for their European masters.

The Elgin Juneteenth Organization (EJO) will feature home-made Southern Tea Cakes on Thursdays during the 2022 Sip, Shop, & Stroll events in downtown Elgin. The influence of the tea cake in Elgin has not gone unnoticed. Proceeds benefit the EJO and MLK Scholarship Funds. For additional information, please contact Bishop Mays, 512.461.4750 or Bettye Lofton, 512.963.2721.

Submitted by Shirlee Medlock

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter softened (2 sticks)
- 2 cups sugar
- 3 eggs room temperature
- 2 tablespoon buttermilk
- 5 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla



Instructions

Cream the butter until soft and pale yellow in color. Gradually add the sugar to the butter, beating well. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the buttermilk and beat well again.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour and soda. Turn the mixer down to the slowest speed and gradually add the flour and soda mixture into the creamed mixture. Add in the vanilla. Shape the dough into a round or rectangle, cover with plastic wrap, and chill several hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly grease two cookie sheets. If you chill your dough overnight, remove it from the fridge about 15 minutes before rolling. Working with 1/4 to 1/3 of the dough at a time, roll dough to 1/4" thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut the dough into rounds using a large biscuit cutter or a drinking glass dipped into flour. Gather the scraps together, re-roll, and cut until all dough is used. Place the rounds 1 inch apart on lightly greased cookie sheets. Sprinkle lightly with additional sugar. Bake for 7-9 minutes or until the edges are very lightly browned. Remove the cookie sheets from the oven and allow tea cakes to cool for several minutes before transferring to wire racks to cool completely.

TIPS:

>> When rolling out the dough, it's important that it's at least 1/4" thick to give the tea cakes a "cake-y" interior texture.

>>To make rolling the dough easier, use either waxed paper or parchment paper. Place one piece on your countertop, sprinkle it lightly with flour. Put a portion of the dough on the paper and sprinkle its top with flour as well. Add another piece of paper to the top (making a sandwich of the paper and dough) and roll out.

>>To prevent the tea cakes from spreading while baking, make sure the dough is still quite cold as you roll and cut it. Then put the tea cakes directly into the oven to bake. Keep any extra dough covered in the refrigerator until needed.

>>Store tea cakes at room temperature in a covered container.

References Texas Tea Cake Company and Lana Stuart Cooking, 2009

For more information, contact Bettye Lofton at (512) 963-2721. Forms are available at the Elgin Chamber of Commerce.



JUNE 10 & 11 23RD ANNUAL *Elgin's* JUNETEENTH FESTIVAL & GRAND PARADE



Celebrate the Sesquicentennial #ETX150 and Elgin Juneteenth by watching this year's JUNETEENTH GRAND PARADE, SET FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 11TH. The Sesquicentennial committee plans on celebrating Elgin's birthday and honoring Juneteenth in this year's parade with our official #sesquicentennial birthday float debut and so should you!

THE PARADE BEGINS AT 10 A.M. at **Booker T. Washington Elementary school** and travels north on Main Street to 2nd Street, turns on to Avenue C and then travels south to Brenham Street.

If you need **additional information**, please contact Bettye Lofton, (512) 963-2721 or at bettyelofton@prodigy.net.

ELGIN JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION SCHEDULE OF EVENTS:

june 10 **FRIDAY**

Street Dance on Depot Street featuring DJ Darshe Resse from 8 p.m. to midnight with food Vendors in Veterans Park serving up traditional festival fare and Texas BBQ.

june 11 **SATURDAY**

Parade on Main Street @ 10 a.m. registration forms available online in English and Spanish at www.infoetx150.com. After the parade come down to Veteran's Park for the Juneteenth festivities! Meet the Royal Court, let the kids enjoy the bounce houses, and celebrate with song, food and fellowship throughout the day until 6pm.

june 19 **JUNETEENTH ON JUNETEENTH**

Join Reverend Townsend for a Candlelight Vigil at Sunset in honor of Juneteenth. The event takes place in Thomas Park.



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*Congratulations to Dr. Jana Rueter,
for being named as the next
Superintendent of Elgin Independent
School District.*

The Elgin ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the hiring of Dr. Jana Rueter as the next Superintendent of Schools at a special called meeting on May 9, 2022. Dr. Rueter will replace Dr. Jodi Duron, who has served the District for the past ten years and will be retiring, effective June 30, 2022. Dr. Rueter's official capacity as Superintendent will begin July 1, 2022.

Dr. Rueter holds a Bachelor's degree from Texas Tech, a Masters degree from Texas A&M, and a Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Texas.

Her educational career spans nearly three decades of public education service, with executive level administrative experience in such positions as assistant superintendent, executive director, supervi-

sor of principals, and manager of federal programs. Previously, she served as a district leader in Georgetown ISD and San Angelo ISD. She also served as a campus leader in Conroe ISD, Pflugerville ISD, and Leander ISD. Her husband, John, of 20 years, is also a career educator and a retired campus principal. They are the proud parents of three children – Hayden, Hope, and Julia Grace. Her father, Dr. Bill Graves, served as the Superintendent of Elgin ISD from November 2004 - June 2012.

Welcome, Dr. Rueter, to the Wildcat Family!

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The Summer of 1991



Pictured are Tracy Snowden Ortiz & Gary Snowden.

Western Days

by Tracy Snowden Ortiz

All of my life Western Days has been one of my favorite Elgin events. As a young girl I would spend several weeks dreaming up what I wanted to be in the “kiddy parade.” One year our Saint Bernard pulled us in a cart and another year M’liss Meyer, my brother Gary and I dressed as characters from Little Red Riding Hood. One year my imagination really got carried away and I was a hamburger advertising my grandmother’s restaurant, Lundgren’s Café.

I’ve always loved watching the big parade and waving at people that I knew as they passed by. Of course, my favorite parade entry was always David Fenske and his family. What they came up with each year was always entertaining. More than watching that parade I loved riding in the parade and one year wanted to participate so much that my grandmother, Elwanda Lundgren, asked Bubba Johnson if I could ride on the Elgin SPJST float. Of course, they didn’t say no. What fun I had riding on the back of that trailer dressed in overalls and pretending to fish over the side.

I remember the fish fry that my aunt and uncle, Rhonda and Ronnie Moore, would host at their house on Main Street on the Friday night of Western Days. SO many friends to see and visit with-everyone seemed to be there- invited or not.

The Fireman’s dance was also a mesmerizing thing for me as a child. I remember watching the dancer’s from outside the tennis court fence as a child and the fun of dancing to the Debonaires as teenager.

Of course, Saturday afternoon at the park was maybe the most fun. I remember running around with friends, riding the rides at the carnival, watching the arm-wrestling contests and begging my mother for more money to spend. All are wonderful memories of a wonderful small-town childhood.

The most memorable of Western Days for me will always be the summer of 1991. It is still one of my sweetest memories. That Friday night of Western Days, my boyfriend and now my husband, Pascual Ortiz and I were going to go “riding around” before we went to the park. My brother and his girlfriend, Leah Godfrey Stephens, decided to go with us. We rode up and down Main Street for a while and then headed to the park. I remember that we ate Lopez hamburgers and then decided to go into the dance. I visited, laughed and danced with high school friends that I hadn’t seen since we graduated in 1987. I danced with my brother twice that night and even then it seemed really special to me. Garth Brooks was really popular then and his song “The Dance” was his current hit. We danced to that song that night.

I didn’t know then how prophetic that song was for me and my family. It would be the last time I danced with my brother. My brother, Gary Lynn Snowden, Jr. died unexpectedly the next weekend. Western Days holds lots of wonderful memories for me, but dancing on the tennis court with my brother on that hot July night in 1991 is my sweetest memory of all.



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WHAT STARTED AS A HOBBY FOR A THEN 12-YEAR-OLD CHRIS VAN CALSTER HAS NOW FLOURISHED INTO A LOCAL JERKY BUSINESS IN DOWNTOWN ELGIN.

Chris Van Calster, CEO of ATX Jerky, spoke with the City of Elgin and told his story of how the local, family-owned business started a few years ago.

Q: What all does ATX Jerky distribute besides jerky?

A: We produce our own jerky here, as well as honey and pickles. We have about 25 flavors of jerky. I've been making it since I was 12-years-old.

Q: What made you want to start making jerky at such a young age?

A: When I was a kid, I would go on hunting trips with my dad. I asked him if we could learn how to make jerky together. At the time, he would slice the roast, and I would do the marinade.

Q: When did you start the ATX Jerky business?

A: We started producing jerky and rented a shared kitchen in Austin. That's why the name is ATX Jerky. We started selling in 2015 to co-work-

For more information on ATX Jerky, visit the website at atxjerky.com.



ers, and eventually, at local farmers markets. We ship to all 50 states, and we have about 50 retail stores that we sell at in Austin. The farthest we go south is Waco, north is Waco, and west is Bee Caves.

Q: Is there anything ATX Jerky is doing for Sesquicentennial-themed events?

A: We have a new recipe we came out with for the 150th. We came out with our own sausage flavors—original breakfast sausage, maple breakfast sausage, and bourbon barrel-aged maple breakfast sausage. We included the sesquicentennial logo on our packaging.

Q: Are there other products that can be found at ATX Jerky?

A: In our storefront, we sell more than just our products. It's everyone else's products from the farmers market, like salsa, hot sauce, olive oil, nuts, and dried fruits on our shelves.

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The Elgin City Council and Elgin Economic Development Corporation approved an economic development agreement that will aid with the development of a large dining, retail, and entertainment complex located near Roy Rivers Road and U.S. Highway 290. The development will include three-buildings totaling 54,000-square-feet of retail and 40,000-square-feet of outdoor patio space.

Aviator Pizza & Draughthouse opened its first location in Elgin in 2014 and has expanded to multiple locations in Central Texas since. This unique development is a passion project for owners John McElroy and Ana Lam-McElroy as a token of gratitude for getting their start in Elgin. They want to provide the community a family friendly venue for everyone in Elgin to enjoy and a destination venue for people visiting. Aviator Pizza & Draughthouse will be constructed in three phases and they will break ground by the end of the year.

--Kaley Frye, Assistant Director Economic Development Corporation

Rainey
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What's Happening in Elgin?

Check out our online **Community Event Calendar**.

Community and member events take place all year long and are a great way to get to know the different people and places within the community. Our online Community Event Calendar is **updated daily** and is the local go-to calendar to find out What's Happening in Elgin and the surrounding area.

Here you'll find live entertainment, community and member business events and specials, City of Elgin and Bastrop County events and festivals, and everything in between. You will also find our **calendar rack cards distributed to over 15 locations throughout the community**. Scan the QR code on the rack card to view the online calendar. Enjoy browsing through our community events calendar listings and **find the perfect activity to enjoy any time of year.**

www.business.elgintxchamber.com/events

Kristan Green-Bettes
Vice-President, Membership & Communication

A Commitment to Community



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Sesquicentennial FLOAT

Inspired by the State of Texas Centennial Float, Elgin Sesquicentennial Co-Chair's Deborah Cartwright and Forest Dennis are working with local artist and Clever Tiger Gallery owner, Ashley Smith and a cadre of volunteers to design and build the official Elgin Sesquicentennial Float! Special thanks goes to the City of Elgin Public Works Department and the Elgin Economic Development Corporation for supporting this grand production, 150 years in the making.

Much progress has been made on the birthday cake inspired float to date. Spectators and birthday well wishers can expect to see the official Elgin Sesquicentennial float make its debut along Main Street during this year's Juneteenth Parade, Saturday June 11th.

The float will participate in the upcoming Western Days, Veteran's Appreciation and Lighted Christmas Parade festivities. So mark your calendars and join in wishing a happiest of 150th birthdays to Elgin during its Sesquicentennial year!



VETERANS' MEMORIAL PARK EXPANSION MASTER PLAN



Veterans' Memorial Park Expansion is an exciting new addition to the Elgin Park System, creating a beautiful and engaging downtown park in the 200 block of Depot Street and Central Avenue. The park expansion is located across the street from the new Elgin Police Department station that will be constructed in 2022-2023, and adjacent to the 1903 Veterans' Park with gazebo and historic cannon. The Veterans' Memorial Park Expansion project will incorporate a thematic train playground, splash pad, covered stage and outdoor classroom, sidewalks, covered multipurpose area, lighting, site furnishings, fencing, signage, storage, and restroom. The Park expansion reflects

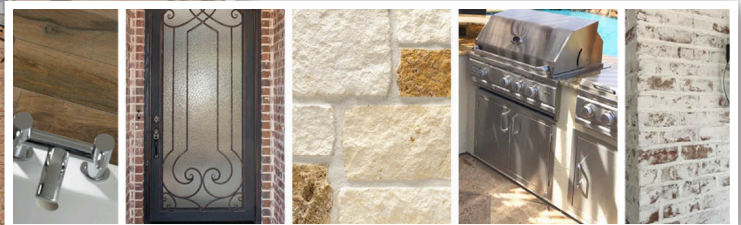
diverse community input, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan and the Sustainable Places Plan. Elements in the park relate directly to Elgin's history including the train-themed playground resembling the 1870's trains that founded Elgin and the splash pad referencing the fountain installed in 1903 by the Ladies New Century Club. Elgin City Council approved the park expansion site plan in April and allocated \$600,000 from 2021 Certificates of Obligation Bonds to fund phase 1. The City is seeking funding through grants, sponsorships and donations to support the full construction of this high quality public park. More information at www.elgintx.com



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QUESTION: WHAT ARE SOME EASY ACTIVITIES I CAN DO LOCALLY THIS SUMMER?

DAN: I've always been really impressed with Elgin's parks, and there are a lot of things to do there that I'm not sure everyone knows about.

Memorial Park, the big park behind the recreation center at the corner of 95 N and Main Street, has volleyball courts, basketball courts, and tennis courts, but one thing that I think just kind of gets hidden towards the back is the horseshoes and washers pits and there is a gameboard Pavillion next to it! Check out pieces at Rec Center.

I've picked up washers at our local hardware stores before and that's a good fun thing to do, particularly because it's actually quite shady over there. The pits are towards the back. If you're standing in the main parking lot looking at the softball field, they're basically to the left of that.

Thomas Park has disc golf in addition to playground equipment for the kids and some sports courts.

Morris Memorial Park is actually my favorite of the parks in Elgin simply because it's kind of hidden and has a cute little pond back there. I've seen people fishing out there before and there are some cute ducks to feed!

Morris Memorial Pool is also at that location and is a great way to spend a Saturday! Definitely check the Elgin Parks and Recreation Department's website and social media pages as well! Just a quick search showed me that they've had Pickleball Nights, Volleyball Nights, Wildcat Walkers events, and lots of other fun sounding things lately!

One thing I'm looking forward to in June is another Luna Market event hosted by She Creates Union on June 3 from 6-9 p.m. at Elgin Memorial Park! Then of course there's Western Days, but I have a feeling there will be plenty more information about that in this issue!

QUESTION: WHAT ARE SOME NON-AUSTIN DAY TRIPS I COULD TAKE THIS SUMMER?

What, you don't like bumper-to-bumper traffic and \$10 lemonade?

I became a hiker during the COVID times and started going to Bastrop State Park a lot. I did pretty much every trail they have there about a year or so back and I think the purple trail was my favorite if I recall correctly.

What I enjoyed the most about it was the fact that I really didn't run into very many other people on the trails. That probably will change this summer but if you're looking for some peace and quiet I'd definitely recommend pairing a 2-3 hour hike there with some other Bastrop-area activities.

On that same note, I took a trip about 45 minutes east two Septembers ago and really enjoyed Nails Creek State Park. Honestly, I went there because of the name! It's kind of tricky to find information about it online but I promise it exists! There was a main park entrance with signage and what-not, but there was actually a smaller side entrance off a side road that I really enjoyed because, once again, I literally didn't see another human being there the entire day.

There's a winery out in McDade now called

Rising Sun Vineyard that's pretty cool. One thing I've learned from going out there a few times is that you'll be pretty well rewarded if you're there around closing time. The dude who owns the place, Steve, is a great musician and they always have a fun band there, and I've seen several folks I know from town get up on stage and sort of improvise some songs with Steve and the band.

So if I was you, I would definitely consider planning a day trip to Nails Creek Park and then come back this direction, hit the winery around like 4, and then be home for dinner by like 8.

I've also heard good things about Granger Lake.

I don't really fish but people who do seem to like it out there. Lake Bastrop South Shore Park is only like 20 minutes away and is a nice place to swim, and I've heard the North Shore Park is cool too even though I've never been there.

If you want to head north, I'd recommend Coupland Dance Hall for a concert some night over the summer, and it's probably worth spending a few hours in Taylor just to see the new stuff there. I'd particularly check out Black Sparrow Music Parlor for some live music. That place is sweet!

Dan Kleiner is originally from Houston and spent time in Wimberley, Karnes City and Madisonville before finally finding his home in Elgin in 2014. His favorite parts of living in Elgin are being able to walk around downtown, seeing all of his friends at citywide events like Western Days and the Farmers Market, and seeing how interesting and creative so many people are in town with their businesses, hobbies and passions.